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# Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Office in Angola

## I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 7 of Security Council resolution 1268 (1999) of 15 October 1999, in which the Council, *inter alia*, requested me to provide every three months, a report on developments in Angola, including recommendations on additional measures the Council might consider to promote the peace process. It covers developments since January 2000.

## II. Political developments

2. In my previous report (S/2000/23), I gave an assessment of the political, military and humanitarian situation in the country and stressed that the absence of political dialogue and the resumption of heavy fighting had exacerbated the already alarming humanitarian situation. I also noted that the situation had been further aggravated by the spillover of the fighting into neighbouring Zambia and Namibia, leading to an influx of large numbers of Angolan refugees on both sides of the border areas.

3. The Government of Angola has continued to call upon the followers of the União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola (UNITA), led by Jonas Savimbi, to abandon him and President José Eduardo dos Santos has expressed his readiness to forgive all those who renounce the use of force as a means of attaining political power. A number of civic organizations have underlined the need for the promulgation of a general amnesty law and the holding of an all-inclusive national conference to discuss the problems facing the country.

4. President dos Santos has announced that general elections will be held in late 2001. The Secretary-General of the ruling Movimento Popular para a Libertacão de Angola (MPLA) has promised that all political parties will be consulted prior to fixing a date for the elections. The Constitutional Commission of the Angolan National Assembly has begun consultations on a draft Constitution proposed by the MPLA members of Parliament.

5. Opposition political parties have been unanimous in welcoming the announcement of the elections but have questioned whether the initiative would not be premature in the face of the continuing civil war, inadequate infrastructure and the need for electoral reform. Some political parties have also called for an independent electoral commission, a new electoral law and a population census. UNITA, led by Mr. Savimbi, has characterized the announcement as a calculated attempt to avoid the second round of presidential elections provided for in the provisions of the Lusaka Protocol (S/1994/1441, annex).

6. On 29 March 2000, the Episcopal Conference of Catholic Bishops of Angola and Sao Tome and Principe issued a pastoral letter appealing to the Government not to dismiss dialogue and to grant a general amnesty in the search for national reconciliation. The Bishops also appealed for the respect of human rights and called upon the United Nations to assist in the search for a peaceful resolution of the Angolan conflict.

7. The Government has reiterated its rejection of any negotiation with Mr. Savimbi. Press reports indicate that a recent offer of mediation by the Government of South Africa for a negotiated end of the conflict was rejected by the Government. On 16

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February 2000, the Secretary-General of the ruling MPLA justified the rejection on the grounds that South Africa was a member of the Southern African Development Community (SADC), which had declared Mr. Savimbi a war criminal and an invalid interlocutor in the Angolan peace process.

8. Recent statements made by senior officials from the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America also indicated that their Governments could no longer consider Mr. Savimbi a valid interlocutor in the Angola peace process.

9. In a Voice of America interview on 3 March, General Lukamba Paulo Gato, Secretary-General of UNITA, stated that it was up to the Government to initiate discussions with UNITA to end the fighting. He also said that Mr. Savimbi was in Angola, and dispelled reports regarding his being unwell. In a media interview on 2 March, General Gato indicated that UNITA had written to the Secretary-General to seek a change in the composition of the three observer States of the Lusaka peace process, arguing that the neutrality of the three countries had been compromised by their national interests. He also reiterated the readiness of UNITA to hold talks with the Government and noted that UNITA had no objection to an all-inclusive national dialogue to end the conflict in the country.

10. The continued conflict in Angola is of increasing concern not only to its neighbours but also to the subregion as a whole. Alleging that the decision of the Government of Namibia had allowed the forces of the Government of Angola to use its territory, UNITA stated its intention to intensify attacks against Namibia. Reports indicate that Namibian security forces and UNITA forces clashed at the border post at Mbambi, east of Rundu, in northern Namibia during the third week of March.

11. The security situation along the border with Zambia is reported to have improved in recent weeks. The Angola-Zambia Permanent Defence and Security Commission met at Luanda on 7 and 8 February and was also received by President dos Santos. The Commission agreed on the need to reinforce security along the common border of the two countries. Zambia regretted that the intensification of the war along its borders was creating instability and agreed to step up efforts to tighten United Nations sanctions against UNITA. Zambia also expressed its determination to remain neutral and declined the request that the Angolan Armed Forces (FAA) engage in a hot pursuit mission into Zambian territory. With the cooperation of Zambian authorities, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) has completed the transfer of the last group of Angolan refugees from Sinjembela to Nangweshi, which now houses some 9,000 refugees and is further inland in Zambia.

12. The Government has undertaken diplomatic initiatives to explain its position regarding the war and the new political dispensation it has planned leading up to elections as well as to continue efforts to further isolate Mr. Savimbi. President dos Santos attended the inauguration in March of President Sam Nujoma in Windhoek, where he briefed Presidents Joaquim Chissano, who is also the current Chairman of SADC, Mr. Nujoma and Robert Mugabe on the political and military situation in Angola and on his Government's efforts to normalize conditions in the country. The leaders also discussed the security situation in the region.

13. On 3 March, President dos Santos received the Minister of Fisheries of Morocco who carried a special message from King Mohammed VI. Other foreign dignitaries who visited Angola included the Vice Foreign Minister of Slovakia, Andrew Young, the Special Envoy of the President of the United States, and Xanana Gusmão, President of the National Council of Timorese Resistance. President dos Santos also visited Slovakia and attended the Africa-European Union Summit at Cairo on 3 and 4 April.

14. The trial in Luanda of two independent journalists, charged with defamation of President dos Santos, ended on 31 March. Rafael Marques was sentenced to six months in prison and fined US$ 16,000, while Aguiar dos Santos was sentenced to three months in jail and fined $6,000. Both journalists were granted bail and have appealed their sentences.

15. Meanwhile, the Chairman of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 864 (1993) concerning the situation in Angola, Robert Fowler, and the Panel of Experts established by the Security Council pursuant to resolution 1237 (1999), on sanctions against UNITA, the Government of Angola and regional and extra-regional Governments on ways of improving the implementation of measures imposed against UNITA and the additional measures

needed to strengthen them. As the Council is aware, the Chairman undertook a mission from 8 to 16 January 2000 to Angola and has briefed the Council on his consultations and findings.

16. The report of the Panel of Experts on violations of Security Council sanctions against UNITA (S/2000/203) was issued on 10 March and was considered by the Security Council at an open meeting on 15 March. A number of Governments and corporations have announced that they would be undertaking measures in compliance of the sanctions approved by the Security Council. For its part, UNITA has dismissed the allegations contained in the sanctions report on the grounds that they were based on statements made by defectors.

17. In a letter dated 3 February 2000 addressed to me, the Minister of External Relations of Angola conveyed his Government's formal approval of the status of mission agreement for the United Nations Office in Angola (UNOA) and pledged support for the Office. The Government indicated that it expected the activities of the Office to be oriented fundamentally towards issues related to capacity-building in the field of human rights and humanitarian assistance in Angola. With the end of the United Nations peacekeeping mandate in Angola, the lead responsibility for UNOA within the Secretariat was transferred in January 2000 from the Department of Peacekeeping Operations to the Department of Political Affairs.

## III. Military situation

18. Reports indicate that despite military clashes in several regions of the country, government forces have continued to be effective in further reducing the conventional war capability of UNITA and forcing it to resort to guerrilla attacks. FAA is also reported to be undergoing retraining and reconfiguration to counter UNITA attacks and is being deployed in provincial centres. The FAA Commander, General João Matos, who has now established a base of operations in the eastern province of Moxico, has confirmed the training and adaptation of specialized forces in guerrilla warfare. These military developments continue to exacerbate the deplorable humanitarian situation affecting the civilian population and are causing instability in much of the country as well as along the border with Namibia and Zambia.

19. After the fall of UNITA strongholds in the central highlands in October 1999, FAA opened several fronts in its effort to neutralize the residual rebel forces. The clean-up operations were launched in Uíge province to dislodge UNITA elements from their logistic base in Maquela do Zombo, and from southern Malange province, where the presence of residual UNITA conventional units was reported, as well as from known UNITA safe havens around the eastern and southern borders of Angola.

20. Government forces continued to enjoy the initiative and the upper hand on the battlefield until early January, when UNITA started launching guerrilla attacks in the provinces of Uíge, Kwanza-Norte, Kwanza-Sul, Malange, Huambo, Bié and Huíla. Reportedly, the rebel units have been regrouped, redeployed and instructed to carry out decentralized and generalized guerrilla operations. The Government has responded by establishing a specialized force which is currently undergoing training in anti-guerrilla warfare.

21. FAA cross-border operations in the south-east against UNITA have been facilitated by the support granted to it by the Government of Namibia. UNITA had conducted regular retaliatory attacks and made north-eastern Namibia insecure. FAA has captured the former UNITA headquarters of Jamba, but fighting is still being reported along the Zambian border, leading to an influx of Angolan refugees into that country.

22. The security situation in general continues to deteriorate in Angola, particularly along border areas with Zambia and Namibia. According to reports by United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations, indiscriminate attacks on the civilian population and the humanitarian aid community have worsened the humanitarian situation and have affected Zambia and Namibia. Government forces are effectively in control of the major cities, but the continuous influx of internally displaced persons who are fleeing the countryside where fighting, road ambushes and mine incidents are common occurrences, is of great concern to relief organizations.

23. Angolan authorities continue to be cooperative in extending assistance to the United Nations team that is coordinating details for the operational and logistical requirements in the investigations into the two United Nations planes (UN 806 and 806A) that crashed in Huambo province in December 1998 and January 1999,

respectively. After three meetings with relevant officials of the Government, the World Food Programme (WFP) and non-governmental organizations in Huambo in 2000, the United Nations team has now concluded that the improved security situation in the area could permit a survey of the first crash site during the current month. Considering the importance of this operation, UNOA continues to closely monitor the security situation with the help of United Nations agencies and non-governmental organizations operating in the central region.

## IV. Human rights aspects

24. Allegations of grave human rights violations have surfaced against both government and UNITA forces. UNOA currently addresses, mainly, capacity-building initiatives designed to overcome structural problems in areas not affected directly by the conflict.

25. UNOA has continued to promote the gradual acceptance by the Government of the existence of serious human rights problems; bringing State actors together to improve the delivery of justice; and facilitating efforts to bring together the forces of civil society and government institutions to address human rights violations at the community level. Even though the problem remains enormous, opportunities exist to achieve positive change. A good example is the creative partnership between UNOA and the non-governmental organization Trócaire which, with donor-country funds, helps to develop and execute projects that contribute to an improvement in the human rights situation in Angola.

26. UNOA has been supporting the Office of the Prosecutor-General with training and material to develop a computerized case-tracking system, which is expected to be fully operational in Luanda, Benguela and Huíla provinces by the end of March 2000. As the great majority of detainees are presently held awaiting trial for periods in excess of those permitted by law, this system will enable the Prosecutor's Office to monitor the problem of illegal detentions and to control and improve respect for legal procedures. UNOA also provided all provincial courts and Prosecutor's offices with access to relevant legal reference material. UNOA has further provided support to religious and legal organizations, non-governmental organizations and government entities operating at the local level (including municipal prosecutors, police and the military) to organize workshops and seminars, and to produce plays and human rights materials such as books and pamphlets. These efforts contribute to an ongoing community-based process to improve the knowledge of Angolans of their rights and how to exercise and to defend them.

27. Angola has signed over 20 international human rights treaties, 6 of which have regular reporting requirements. At the request of the Government, from 14 to 16 March, UNOA assisted the Ministry of External Relations to organize a workshop to address the recognized deficiencies and to take the necessary action to enable Angola to fulfil its international obligations by producing these reports. The workshop was attended by representatives of relevant government institutions. This recent shift in the Government's discourse and actions, combined with a more vibrant civil society and an increasingly outspoken private press, have created a new political space. The first opposition-led demonstration since 1977 was held on 11 March without incident. Freedom of expression was debated among political and civil society leaders and in the National Assembly. State-owned media has also shown greater openness and interest in human rights, although there has been no clear recognition of the need to reform the press laws.

28. UNOA has identified three basic issues that require special attention: the need to ensure respect for the human rights of a vast population of internally displaced persons; the lack of the necessary government and State structures to ensure respect for human rights in areas recently captured from UNITA forces; and the continuing decline of basic socio-economic benefits for a substantial majority of the population, a situation that has been aggravated by recent government measures designed to meet World Bank conditionalities. UNOA is currently developing strategies to address these interrelated issues, through greater integration of human rights principles and methods within current humanitarian and development responses.

29. During the reporting period, UNOA has continued to develop the capacity of Angolan institutions. An intrasectoral workshop aimed at improving the justice system was held on 11 February with the participation of all those involved at the operational level of the justice sector. The workshop, organized in collaboration with the Ministry of Justice, the Prosecutor's Office, the Angolan National Police

and Angolan non-governmental organizations, was followed by a seminar on the theme "Human rights in the context of law and justice", and a working session between the police and non-governmental organizations on creating projects to improve police respect for human rights.

## V. Humanitarian aspects

30. In spite of continuing efforts by the humanitarian community to stabilize the situation of emergency in those places where operations are possible, indications suggest that the condition of vulnerable populations (both displaced and resident) remains precarious. The improvement of conditions in these areas, and assessing conditions in new areas, present a challenge to both the Government and the international community. What agricultural production has been possible in the year 2000 will not be sufficient to meet requirements. It is clear that humanitarian assistance will continue to be pivotal in the year ahead.

31. Developments in the last three months have underlined the continued vulnerability of vast numbers of displaced and resident populations, both as a direct result of war and from structural failures, such as general economic decline, impoverishment and unemployment. The war-affected civilian population — the internally displaced population and civilian war-affected people — is 3.7 million (out of a total population estimated at 12.6 million), of which nearly 1.6 million are internally displaced. New displacements that began in April 1998 have continued, although there was a reduction in numbers from late November 1999. However, internally displaced population numbers started to climb again at the beginning of 2000, owing to increased guerrilla warfare activities. More than 30,000 refugees have fled into Zambia and Namibia since October 1999.

32. The lack of security for humanitarian relief operations continues to be a major constraint on the work of the international community in Angola. The scope of humanitarian activities is primarily confined to areas inside and around the provincial capitals. The fact that the Government has, since September 1999, retaken key locations means that the humanitarian community may soon have access to the populations in those areas. However, even where the Government has gained military control, the security situation in the surrounding areas remains extremely volatile, and those zones are still inaccessible to the humanitarian community. For example, Bailundo, Jamba and Andulo were retaken by government forces in late 1999 but, to date, only one assessment mission has been able to visit Bailundo. The humanitarian status of one third of the Angolan population who live in inaccessible areas remains unknown but is believed to be critical. Heavy rains, frequency of flights, poor maintenance and damaged airports (Kuito and Cuito Cuanavale), all combine to threaten the safe delivery of aid in sufficient quantities.

33. There has been a dramatic rise in accidents in recent months owing to both old and new landmines. On 19 March 2000, a United Nations relief worker was seriously injured when his car drove over an anti-tank mine in Cuvelai, Cunene province. Consequently, assistance in Cuvelai, which had resumed only one week earlier, after a break of several months, has again been interrupted for security reasons. Civilians, and particularly women, continue to suffer the most, generally while attempting to return to their fields or in search of food and firewood. Mine clearance, which has been curtailed since the conflict reignited, is of critical importance for any safe resumption of agricultural and commercial activities, and for the eventual return of internally displaced persons to their homes in rural areas. Furthermore, as the conflict moves away from the provincial cities, security incidents in isolated areas have increased. The mounting risk of mine accidents and ambushes is a profound constraint on humanitarian operations that must not be ignored.

34. Acceptable conditions for access demand that security requirements be met, as the level of security dictates the quantity of aid that can be safely delivered. Donor commitment to supporting security for the humanitarian community is essential to safe humanitarian intervention. The present security situation is best described as uneven. Access beyond urban perimeters is highly restricted owing to the deterioration of the infrastructure (roads/bridges) and the continuing threat of ambushes and mine incidents. Road access, necessary to deliver relief commodities from provincial capitals to remote areas, is sometimes possible but extremely risky because of exposure to mine accidents and ambushes. Main roads in the country remain unusable and the transportation of humanitarian staff and relief supplies to provincial

capitals can usually be accomplished only by costly airlift operations.

35. In March, the Secretary-General requested the Emergency Relief Coordinator a.i. to lead an inter-agency mission to examine the critical needs of vulnerable groups, in particular those of internally displaced populations. The delegation travelled to the provinces of Bié, Huambo and Uíge, to gain an overview of the challenge posed by internally displaced persons and the capacity of relief agencies and to assess the gaps in the humanitarian response. Following the mission, a series of in-depth needs assessments are being planned to review short-term requirements of the vulnerable populations, the capacity of agencies to respond and additional resources needed in accessible locations. An assessment task force has been established with United Nations agencies, Government and non-governmental organizations, and over 20 locations have been identified for the first phase of these needs assessment missions.

36. The current conditions of insecurity and open conflict require costly logistical operations to ensure safe delivery of humanitarian assistance. In addition, the possible increased access to vulnerable populations demands that the donor community remain as responsible to the consolidated appeal as they have been in the past. The funding requirements of the 2000 United Nations Inter-Agency Consolidated Appeal for Angola is $258 million, of which 25 per cent has been covered in the first quarter of 2000. However, the majority of aid received is for food, and complementary sectors of intervention remain underfunded to date.

## VI. Socio-economic situation

37. The renewed civil war continues to aggravate the already profound and prolonged socio-economic crisis, whose consequences are reflected in the various indicators of human development, which, notwithstanding the fact that Angola is potentially one of the richest countries on the continent, are worse than the averages for sub-Saharan Africa, including many of the conflict-affected States.

38. The inadequate financial resources available for the social sector, as more revenue is used to finance the war, has meant a deterioration in the quality of services rendered, from the supply of water and sanitation facilities to the provision of education and health care. The ongoing conflict continues to exacerbate the grave humanitarian crisis, resulting in greater poverty and increasing numbers of displaced and vulnerable persons. More than 70 per cent of the population continues to live below the poverty line.

39. In an effort to address the enormous humanitarian problems facing the country, in July 1999 the Government created an Inter-Ministerial Commission on Humanitarian Assistance comprising the Ministries of Planning; Social Assistance and Reintegration; Territorial Administration; Health; Commerce; and Agriculture and Rural Developments. The results of the $56 million National Emergency Programme for Humanitarian Assistance, launched by the Commission in October 1999, are yet to be known.

40. The economy continues to face serious macro-economic instability, balance-of-payment problems (a deficit of over $1 billion) and large foreign debt of around $12.6 billion. With inflation running at more than 300 per cent by the end of 1999, there has been a substantial decline in the purchasing power of Angolans. From January to mid-April 2000, monthly inflation has been recorded in two digit figures. On 2 March, the Government announced salary increases for public sector workers, in the face of the increased cost of living provoked by the huge rise in fuel prices. However, neither the extent nor the effective date for the salary increase has been disclosed.

41. In January, the Government reached an agreement with the International Monetary Fund (IMF) for the preparation of a monitored economic reform programme effective in March/April 2000. The mission arrived in March. The $5 billion national budget approved by the National Assembly on 27 January prioritized the war effort, economic revival and control of inflation. At the same time, the Government established the Sociedade de Comercialização de Diamantes, a public trading concern with exclusive rights to buy and sell diamonds, leaving the National Diamond Company confined to exploitation and extraction activities.

42. The Economic and Social Development Funds, created by the Government in August 1999 (with total funds of $150 million), became operational on 1 March, with $45 million available in 2000 for medium and long-term loans to small and medium

enterprises in agriculture and agro-industry, fisheries, civil construction and transport.

43. In spite of the constraining war situation, which obliged the United Nations operational agencies to review their programmed activities and intervention strategies, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) continues to assist the Government to address the serious humanitarian and development crisis. Assistance has been limited to providing continued support to capacity-building for coordination of humanitarian assistance (the Ministry of Social Assistance and Reintegration). UNDP facilitated the organization of a national conference on social assistance from 13 to 17 March 2000, aimed at defining a national policy in this area. Sustained support to poverty eradication measures was reflected in the signing, on 23 February, of the project for the second phase of the community rehabilitation and national reconciliation programme, which the Government considers as the key element for its strategy of national reconstruction.

44. Preparations are ongoing for UNDP support to the Government's second cycle of the institutional reform and administrative modernization programme, which will focus mainly on the downsizing of the civil service and the training of civil servants. As an aspect of UNDP support to good governance, the programme is aimed at assisting the Government to establish an efficient and modern decentralized public administration. As a follow-up activity to the preparation and launching of the 1999 Angola Human Development Report, which focuses on the role of civil society in improving the conditions of the population and coping mechanisms in the face of the grave crisis, UNDP launched a series of dissemination campaigns aimed at stimulating debate on the issues raised, with a view to influencing government policy. The first of the planned dissemination exercises took place in the city of Benguela.

45. As the war continues, UNDP supported activities, as well as the interventions of the other United Nations operational agencies, will continue to face major constraints. The enhanced coordination of United Nations intervention has meant more effective contributions to the challenging humanitarian and development crisis in the country. The need for flexibility and scenario-based contingency planning are among the pertinent lessons learned.

# VII. Observations

46. As mentioned in my previous report (S/2000/23), the protracted conflict in Angola and the risks of spillover into the neighbouring countries remain a source of major concern for the international community. Clearly, UNITA bears the primary responsibility for the current state of affairs. Its refusal to comply with key provisions of the Lusaka Protocol (S/1994/1441), in particular its failure to demilitarize its forces and to allow State administration to be extended throughout the country, precipitated the resumption of widespread hostilities.

47. The Government has recently announced plans to re-establish political and military stability, confine the war to controlled areas and complete the extension of State administration throughout Angolan territory. It also plans to step up efforts to institute monetary stability, further economic development and carry out programmes for the provision of humanitarian assistance and social services to the civilian population.

48. As indicated in the present report and widely reported in the media, the humanitarian situation in Angola remains very serious. I reiterate my appeal to all parties concerned to facilitate the delivery of emergency relief assistance. As I have done in the past, I also urge the donor community to respond as generously as possible to this year's United Nations Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for Angola.

49. I also encourage the international community to support the Government in its efforts to provide basic services, such as education, health and a functioning judiciary, to the areas formerly occupied by UNITA. The extension of State administration to those areas will obviously facilitate access to all the population in need.

50. For its part, the United Nations will continue its activities in Angola, which are focused on the provision of humanitarian relief and assistance in the area of capacity-building in the field of human rights. My Adviser for Special Assignments, Under-Secretary-General Ibrahim A. Gambari, will visit Angola in May to discuss various issues with the Government. Previously, in early February, my Personal Envoy, Yaw Turkson, was received by President dos Santos and also held discussions with other senior Government and MPLA officials.

51. Meanwhile, the United Nations Office in Angola is strengthening its efforts, in cooperation with Angolan authorities, to fulfil the responsibilities it has been assigned. I intend to designate the Head of the Office shortly. I would like to seek the support of the Security Council to continue the activities of UNOA for another six months, until 15 October 2000.